

IRISH GIRLS

Find a Harbor of Refuge in the Mission of Our Lady in New York City.

The First Picture of the Great City That Greets the Eye of the Stranger.

What This Noble Institution Has Done for Unprotected Immigrants.

INTENDED AS THE HOME OF A TORY

Some time ago the Kentucky Irish American published a very interesting article concerning the great number of beautiful Irish girls arriving in New York City, in which reference was made to the mission for their protection and the work of the good fathers in charge. This week we print the following complete history of the institution from the pen of Patrick J. Enright in the Syracuse Catholic Sun:

Just within the gateway of the New World, overlooking Battery park and the blue expanse of the Atlantic, stands a quaint looking brick mansion of colonial architecture upon which time has left its indelible imprint. By reason of its location, it is the first picture of the great city of New York that greets the eye of the stranger as he presses on to the American shore. To those whose visit to America is for the purpose of seeking pleasure and recreation, this unimposing structure can furnish but little interest except that the contrast between it and the more modern buildings that line New York bay indicates the process of the development of our metropolitan city. But to the Irish immigrant girls who come as exiles to our shores, seeking the livelihood which the soil of their native land is unable to furnish, this unpretentious edifice of other days is much more attractive than the surrounding structures which are more pleasing to other eyes and more elegant in design. For them it is a refuge which they may enter, and there experience, even among strangers, the goodness of charitable hospitality. Even to that less fortunate class, this building itself might not be more than the object of a casual glance were it not for the words inscribed over its portals and the golden cross that stands out prominently before it. The emblem of the crucified Savior speaks silently and yet with eloquence to the wanderer among strangers, while the inscription makes known to all that may pass that the curious old building is the Home for Irish Immigrant Girls.

It is strange that this edifice, which was constructed at the time when Ireland was in the throes of insurrection, and which was originally intended as the home of an American Tory, should ultimately become an institution to which the exiled daughters of Erin might turn, upon their arrival in America, as a refuge where they might receive counsel and advice; yes, even financial assistance to aid them in their new ventures and undertakings. The adaptability of the edifice for the purpose for which it is now used, and its proximity to the water front, probably furnished the reason for its selection as the home for girls of the Irish race, who, through their benighted circumstances, are compelled to turn to our country to maintain an existence.

Fifteen years have now passed since the hopes and ambitions of the late lamented Father Riboldi of New York City were realized in the founding of this home. For years the venerable and unselfish spirit of that noble priest had battled with the discouraging obstacles which had frequently presented themselves and which at times seemed destined to undermine and destroy the plans which he had made for the protection of Irish maidenhood, but finally he triumphed over all difficulties in the establishment of this charitable institution. To the zeal of that noble priest of God did the home owe its life in the trying days of its early existence, and to his ideas of administration, as followed by his successors in this charitable work, does it owe its prosperity. This grand man whose mind had conceived the idea of protecting the simple and innocent Irish maidens from the wickedness of human land sharks that infest the seaport cities of America continued his charitable work with incessant zeal even to his last breath, upon which lingered the beautiful expression, "Take care of the immigrant girls." That the injunction so solemnly pronounced has been faithfully obeyed by his successors is evidenced by the continued growth and success of the institution.

That it may give the readers of the Sun an idea of the work which is being done by this institution, through its efficient directors and especially through the charitable zeal of its present chief director, Rev. Michael J. Henry, and its agent, Mr. Patrick McCool, we will give the objects for which this charitable refuge was established, as we find them recited in the fifteenth annual address to the friends of the home.

First. To establish a Catholic bureau at the landing depot to supply information to immigrants and to protect their interests against those unscrupulous individuals who would make capital out of ignorance and innocence.

Second. To open a home for the protection of young girls; to guard them from the dangers of a great city; to aid them in securing employment, and to assist those going to friends to reach their destination.

Third. To provide an immigrant chapel to dispense the consolation of religion to Catholic immigrants preparatory

to their entrance to the new fields that await them.

Certainly the objects for which this institution was founded are alone sufficient to merit and to hold the attention, at least of those who were once exiles from their native homes, and who in this land of religious freedom and political equality have prospered to a degree not warranted in a country that for centuries has suffered from tyrannical oppression, persecution and starvation.

If the founders of this home had no other object in mind than to supply a Catholic bureau for the information of Irish immigrants, their purpose would yet be deserving of praise and commendation, for such a department would of necessity materially aid the immigrant to obtain some knowledge of the country to which they have come and would furnish them with reliable information which in many cases is very much needed. How many of the Irish people leave their native country with no particular place in view other than the vast country of America, trusting to God and the magnanimity of the American people to formulate their future designs? Following the methods of their ancestors who since the year 1846 have immigrated to the haven of the West in search of life and liberty. But, alas, they fail to appreciate that times and circumstances have changed and that the country that received the Irish exile of half a century ago is not the America of today, and that the resources which then lay hidden and uncultivated have long since been developed, leaving fewer opportunities to strangers who come in search of a livelihood.

The false idea of America which the Irish immigrant girl entertains leads her to believe that her landing upon American soil is sufficient to insure her immediate success and prosperity. Quite laudable therefore is the work of the institution that would prepare the immigrants and particularly the Irish immigrant girls for the disappointments which must certainly come to them, and which would supply them with knowledge that will aid them to avoid or to overcome the difficulties which have so often crossed the pathway of exiles who have begun life in America without the advice of anyone competent to give wise counsel.

Many, too, reach New York with the expectation of meeting friends who in many instances either neglect to meet them or prove prejudicial rather than favorable to the progress of the immigrant. Under such circumstances the immigrants find that they are friendless and without homes or prospect of work, and must seek aid from some charitable refuge where they remain until they find employment.

But the second object is even more worthy than the first. What grander thought could engage the mind, or what nobler purpose actuate the efforts of man than that which would seek to establish a home for the protection of young girls in order that they might be saved from temptations which otherwise might engulf them? It may not be difficult for the male immigrant, with the aid of advice, to find employment, and especially when that counsel comes from those who are interested in his welfare, but with the immigrant girl it is different; some of them have found themselves unequal to such a task, and hence to obtain a livelihood have even sacrificed their honor. Chiefly to overcome such baneful consequences was the Home for Irish Immigrant Girls established, and it is pleasing to note that since the foundation the home has thrown open its portals to all immigrant Irish girls irrespective of creed, and has welcomed or protected over 200,000 of them until their friends have been found, or until employment is obtained for them in such places as were best adapted to their conditions and education. Some, however, have been unwilling to accept the counsel of those in charge of the home, and have continued upon uncertain journeys with no other recommendation than an address of some relative of a friend in their native land, who, perhaps, if the truth were known, is unable to offer hospitality.

Let us now consider the third object for which the home was founded—to establish an immigrant chapel. Many an immigrant girl's heart has throbbed with joy as she beheld on landing the immigrant chapel in the midst of the activity of New York, where, after a long and tiresome journey, she might receive the consolation of her religion; for whatever may be said of the Irish exiles they have in America held tenaciously to the doctrines of the Catholic church, enunciated to them by the saggarth of the old home. Like Longfellow's Arcadian exiles, the Irish immigrants as they lingered for the last time upon the shores of their native land are consoled by the encouraging words and blessings of the Irish pastor; and it was the idea of the founders of this home that the same exiles might, upon their arrival upon American soil, give thanks to God for their safety by assisting at the divine sacrifice.

The work of the mission is not confined to meeting immigrant girls, who, for some reason or another, are prevented from continuing their journey, nor is it limited to protecting and sheltering them until they are otherwise provided for. Many other benefits accrue to the immigrants, but it is difficult for the public to penetrate beyond these external evidences of charity and to discover the moral influence of this great work.

To bring about the results which have been obtained much time, labor and expense are required, together with the greatest earnestness of purpose allied with sympathy for the Irish people. The time and labor have been willingly contributed by the generous souls in charge, and so ardent are they for the success of their work that they have never faltered or failed to respond when the service of the mission has been required. This same willing service so generously given has often been unappreciated by those whose official duties have been lightened by the same. In fact, the greatest obstacles which have intercepted the progress of the work has arisen from the opposition of the immigration officials appointed by the general government. Fortunately,

to their entrance to the new fields that await them.

Pretty Grace O'Malley.

Words and Music by A. J. PATTON.

Tempo di valse.

1. There's an i - vy - cov - ered cot - tage, Where the myr - tle twines a - round, .
2. In our hap - py child - hood hours, How we of - ten loved to tell . .
3. There's a chap - el on the hill-side, And with-in its walls some day, . .

And with-in it dwells a maid - en fair, The sweet - est ev - er found, . .
Tales of love a - mid the flow - ers till We knew the sto - ry well, . .
I will claim sweet Grace for mine a - lone, Some-time in sun - ny May . .

And the pret - ty song-birds greet her, With mel - o - dies of Spring, .
There I taught the sim - ple les - son - Al-ways long - ing for the time . .
While the wed - ing bells are ring - ing, The song - birds soft - ly sing, . .

As I stand a while and lis - ten, To me they seem to sing, . .
When I put my arms a - round her, And I could call her mine, . .
That the pret - ty gold - en cir - clet, Is sweet Grace's wedding ring, . .

Pret - ty Grace O'-Mal-ley With eyes of ten - der blue, . . .

On moun-tain tops or val-ley, There's none so tried or true. . . . Pret -

ty Grace O' Mal-ley, Some day is sure to wed, . . . And change her

name of Sweet Grace O' Malley, To one that is mine in - stead. . . .

Repeat Chorus.

name of Sweet Grace O' Malley, To one that is mine in - stead. . . .

Pretty Grace O'Malley. — 2.

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however, the officers recently appointed by the Washington authorities have given much assistance and have extended many courtesies to the directors of the home.

Of course the mission has never received financial aid from the municipal, State or national government, but has existed chiefly from the voluntary contribution of friends and of guests who, through curiosity, have visited the home to learn the object and extent of this worthy institution. It is surprising and at the same time blameworthy that those who should be most interested in this work—the Irish people in America—do not give to the mission that support which is proportionate with the benefits which are received from it by the Irish race. Never yet has there remained unanswered by Irishmen in America an appeal sent forth from the Emerald Isle. The virtue of charity deeply imbedded in the Celtic heart has always and ever manifested itself in the financial aid which Irish-Americans have willingly given to uplift their brothers who still suffer from tyrannical rule. And it is this very same circumstance that makes it seem strange that our people have failed to recognize the only institution in America which receives the immigrant Irish girls as they arrive from their native shores, and which yearly accomplishes more to preserve the native purity of Irish womanhood than any other institution within our confines. Nor does the work of the mission end here. It goes still further and endeavors to inculcate in the minds of its wards the idea that in America at least the Irish people have become emancipated by their own fortitude, courage and perseverance, and that they are no longer to be found chiefly among the "hewers of wood and drawers of water;" but on the contrary that they stand in the foremost ranks of business and professional life; and further that the immigrant girl who shall remain industrious and true to herself may hope to obtain social rank equal to the most exalted, for the reason that the republic to which she has given her allegiance has never failed to lend its sympathy to those who have suffered from oppression, and will never fail to extend even to an exile its good will and friendship.

But the work of the mission during the past fifteen years is but a circumstance compared with the continued growth of this institution. While it was at first an experiment, the basic idea of charity upon which it was constructed has ensured such success that we can hope that the near future will find similar institutions in every seaport city of America.

THEATRICALS.

The Avenue, after its week of rest, will reopen Sunday night for the holiday week with Wm. Calder's great scenic production, "John Martin's Secret." Like all of the Sutton Vaudeville melodramas, it abounds in thrilling scenes and sensational climaxes. The leap for life at the end of the third act is said to be one of the most thrilling effects of the modern stage.

Flynn and Sheridan's New City Sports will be next week's attraction at the Buckingham, commencing Sunday, and the standing-room sign will be displayed early. The company always has been

one of the most popular that visits the house, and it has certainly lost none of its good points. Harry Stewart keeps the audience in good humor from the rise to the fall of the curtain. "Theater Francaise," a burlesque in two scenes, introduces the whole company, which includes a dozen or more pretty women handsomely costumed. The Monte Myro troupe of four pantomimists is a late European novelty introduced by clever artists, and heels the olio. Some of the others seen are Miss Ruth Beecher, a sweet singer; Whitelaw and Stewart, the German and the Celt; Scanlon and Stevens in a comedy sketch, and A. C. Lawrence, the clever mimic. "Pastime Among the Flowers," led by Crissie Sheridan, is the dancing novelty of the season. The performance concludes with an exceedingly funny extravaganza, "The Princess of Santiago." There will be a special matinee Christmas Monday.

For Christmas week the Meffert Stock Company has arranged for the production of one of the strongest five-act melodramas ever presented in Louisville. No recent play has met with more popular favor than "Master and Man," and as this will be the first time it has ever been presented at popular prices the Temple should be crowded at every performance. The play is on the style of the "Silver King," and will give each member of the company a favorable opportunity to display the talent they possess. The story is that of a hunchback who loves the village school-mistress, and when she marries another uses every means in his power to wreck their happiness. Her husband is accused of a crime, imprisoned, escapes and is dogged by the villain until the hunchback confesses and his innocence is proved. The situations are very strong, especially one in the fourth act, where an angry mob attempts to throw the hunchback into a red-hot furnace. The comedy is great and plentiful, there being four good comedy characters. It will be magnificently mounted, and as the cast has been augmented a fine production is assured.

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